

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MANILA 05469 01 OF 02 060807Z

ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11

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R 060726Z APR 78

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3991

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MANILA 5469

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, RP

SUBJECT: LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS; CAMPAIGN ENDS; CONCERN OVER
VIOLENCE STRESSED

REF: MANILA 5313

1. SUMMARY: BOTH THE GOVERNMENT'S KBL PARTY AND THE
OPPOSITION LABAN GROUP HAVE PREDICTED VICTORY IN THE
APRIL 7 ELECTION. PRESIDENT MARCOS PROMISED THE ELECTIONS
WILL BE "CLEAN, FREE AND HONEST." IN THE LAST LEGAL HOURS,
HE WENT ON NATIONWIDE TV AND RADIO TO URGE A KBL SWEEP.
VIOLENCE HAS APPARENTLY INCREASED AS THE CAMPAIGN CLIMAXES,
WITH BOTH KBL AND THE MANILA POLICE BLAMING IT ON LABAN
SUPPORTERS. FINAL PRE-ELECTION EDITORIALS HAVE FOCUSED
ON THE VIOLENCE ANGLE. VALENCIA REPORTS STRONG ODDS
FAVORING A KBL SWEEP IN MANILA, WITH A FEW INDEPENDENTS
WINNING IN THE COUNTRYSIDE. END SUMMARY.

2. AS THE 45-DAY CAMPAIGN PERIOD CONCLUDED AT MIDNIGHT
APRIL 5, BOTH SIDES PREDICTED VICTORY. THE GOVERNMENT'S
KBL (QEHXYFE NATIONALISTA PARTY, WHICH IS RUNNING THE SAME
CANDIDATES COUNTRYWIDE) PREDICTED "TOTAL VICTORY" IN ALL
13 REGIONS OF THE COUNTRY. AT THE SAME TIME, KBL BLAMED
THE OPPOSITION LABAN GROUP FOR "THE CLIMATE OF VIOLENCE"
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PAGE 02 MANILA 05469 01 OF 02 060807Z

IN MANILA, SAYING IT WAS A DIRECT RESULT OF THE LABAN
CANDIDATES' INFLAMMATORY AND SEDITIOUS SPEECHES. MEANWHILE,
LABAN PREDICTED A VICTORY FOR MOST OF ITS CANDIDATES,
BASED ON SURVEY RESULTS AND THE RESPONSE OF VOTERS AT ITS
RALLIES. LABAN SPOKESMAN ROCES CALLED THE ELECTION "ONLY
THE BEGINNING IN THE FIGHT FOR BROADER PARTICIPATION IN
THE GOVERNMENT AND THE NORMALIZATION PROCESS."

3. AT A RALLY OF METRO MANILA AIDES APRIL 4, PRESIDENT MARCOS PROMISED THAT THE ELECTION WOULD BE "CLEAN, FREE AND HONEST. MORE THAN ANYBODY ELSE, THE GOVERNMENT, THE PRESIDENT AND THE KBL CANDIDATES ARE INTERESTED IN PRESERVING THE CREDIBILITY OF THE ELECTIONS AND, THEREFORE, WILL NOT ALLOW ANY CONSPIRACY, FRAUD, OR EVIL ACTION ON THE PART OF ANYONE TO IN ANY WAY IMPUGN OR CAST DOUBT ON THE RESULTS." THE PRESIDENT ALSO PROMISED THE METRO MANILA AIDES (MOSTLY STREET SWEEPERS) A 50 PERCENT PAY RAISE, FROM 10 TO 15 PESOS A DAY, RETROACTIVE TO APRIL 1 AND PAYABLE AFTER ELECTION DAY APRIL 7.

4. DURIN THE FINAL HOURS OF THE CAMPAIGN APRIL 5, PRESIDENT MARCOS WENT ON NATIONWIDE TELEVISION AND RADIO FOR HIS TRADITION PRE-ELECTION "PULONG-PULONG" PROGRAM. FLANKED BY KBL CANDIDATES AND CABINET MEMBERS, HE LISTED FIVE BASIC ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE THE FOCUS OF THE ELECTION:

(A) WHETHER FILIPINOS HAVE THE MATURITY AND WISDOM TO BRING ABOUT A RADICAL TRANSFORMATION WITHOUT VIOLENCE;

(B) THE EFFORT OF THE PHILIPPINES TO ATTAIN SELF-RELIANCE IN ITS DEVELOPMENT;

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PAGE 03 MANILA 05469 01 OF 02 060807Z

(C) THE EFFORT TO RESOLVE EXISTING PROBLEMS WITHOUT FOREIGN INTERFERENCE;

(D) THE CONTINUITY OF THE PRESENT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN;

(E) THE UNITY OF THE PEOPLE, WHICH HE SAID IS NEEDED TO ATTAIN THE COUNTRY'S DEVELOPMENTAL GOALS. DURING THE FOUR-HOUR BROADCAST, LOCAL CITIZEN PANELS ASSEMBLED BY TV STATIONS LOBBED RESPECTFUL QUESTIONS AT THE PRESIDENT. (SEE SEPTEL FOR HIS COMMENTS REGARDING FOREIGN INTERFERENCE.)

5. ALLEGED GROWING VIOLENCE, PARTICULARLY IN METRO MANILA, HAS INCREASINGLY DOMINATED HEADLINES IN THE FINAL WEEK OF THE CAMPAIGN. CONSTABULARY CHIEF GENERAL RAMOS PUBLICLY PLACED ALL CONSTABULARY AND POLICE UNITS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY ON "RED ALERT" MORNING OF APRIL 5. MANILA MAYOR BAGATSING CANCELLED ALL RALLIES IN MANILA PROPER APRIL 5 "TO AVERT WHAT COULD BE EVEN BLOODIER INCIDENTS." NEWSPAPERS REPORT NUMEROUS INCIDENTS OF ALLEGED HARASSMENT OF KBL STAFFERS AND FOLLOWERS BY LABAN SYMPATHIZERS,

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PAGE 01 MANILA 05469 02 OF 02 060750Z
ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MANILA 5469

AND MANILA POLICE HEADQUARTERS SAID LABAN FOLLOWERS
ENGAGED IN "AN ORGY OF VANDALISM AND TERRORISM" EVENING
OF APRIL 4 DURING A DEMONSTRATION IN QUEZON CITY.

6. ALLEGED VIOLENCE PROMPTED DAILY EXPRESS AND TIMES
JOURNAL, AS WELL AS AFTERNOON TABLOIDS, TO STRESS THIS
ISSUES IN THEIR ELECTION-EVE EDITORIALS. DAILY EXPRESS CARTOON
APRIL 5 SHOWS LEERING TERRORIST DRESSED AS STATUE OF
LIBERTY HOLDING TORCH MARKED "METRO MANILA FIRES" AND
CLUTCHING GASOLINE CAN. DAILY EXPRESS EDITORIAL APRIL 6
CONCLUDED: "AS MUCH AS THIS PATTERN OF VIOLENCE AND
TERRORISM IS A REPRIS OF THE EARLY '70S, IT IS ALSO A
PREVIEW OF WHAT COULD HAPPEN -- WHAT WILL SURELY HAPPEN --
IF LABAN IS ALLOWED TO INSERT A FOOT IN TO THE CORRIDORS
OF POWER. THERE IS NOTHING WE CAN DO ABOUT WHAT IS PAST,
PAINFUL AND TRUAMATIC AS THAT PAST OF THE EARLY '70S WAS
TO US. BUT THERE IS CERTAINLY A LOT WE CAN DO ABOUT THE
FUTURE -- OUR FUTURE. AND THIS WE CAN DO INSIDE THE
POLLING BOOTHS TOMORROW." TIMES JOURNAL EDITORIAL APRIL 6
ENDED ", "AS A RESULT OF THIS RECENT WAVE OF TERRORISM THE
CHOICE HAS BECOME EVEN CLEARER. FOR THOSE WHO WANT PEACE
AND ORDER, STABILITY, THE RULE OF LAW: KBL. AND FOR THOSE
WHO FAVOR BLOODSHED, DIRORDER, VIOLENCE, RIOTS,
DEMONSTRATIONS, CHAOS AND ANARCHY: LABAN."

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PAGE 02 MANILA 05469 02 OF 02 060750Z

7. COLUMNIST VALENCIA CLAIMED APRIL 5: "THE BETTING
ODDS ARE PS1 WINS AND PS5 THAT NOT ONE OF LABAN WINS IN
THE METRO MANILA ELECTIONS. THERE ARE NO SUCH BETS IN
THE PROVINCES WHERE SOME INDEPENDENTS ARE LIKELY TO
COME OUT."

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